

Message Text

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UNCLAS ATHENS 1432

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

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SUBJECT: CONTINUED REACTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS

REF: ATHENS 1305

1. OUR HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS ON GREECE, CYPRUS AND TURKEY CONTINUE TO ATTRACT ATTENTION HERE. CYPRIOT PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON THEM WHEN HE ARRIVED IN ATHENS LAST TUESDAY AND SO WAS PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS FOLLOWING HIS FEBRUARY 15 MEETING WITH KYPRIANOU. EARLIER IN THE WEEK A WRITTEN QUESTION WAS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT BY A GROUP OF PASOK DEPUTIES ASKING WHY THE GOG HAS NOT PUBLICLY PROTESTED THE GROSS INACCURACIES OF THE REPORTS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND TO INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION.

2. ALTHOUGH THE INTENSITY OF THE COVERAGE IS SUBSIDING IN THE
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PRESS, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL EDITORIALS ON THE SUBJECT, REFLECTING GENERAL ATTITUDES AND VIEWS. IN A RARE DISPLAY OF UNANIMITY, THE NEWSPAPERS PERSIST IN ATTACKING WHAT IS VIEWED AS THE PRO-TURKISH BIAS IN ALL THREE REPORTS AND IN CHARGING THAT THEY ARE PART OF AN OVERALL PLAN TO CREATE A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE TO INDUCE THE CONGRESS TO LIFT THE ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST TURKEY.

3. SEVERAL EDITORIALS LOUDLY CONDEMN WHAT IS USUALLY REFERRED TO AS "PRESIDENT CARTER'S REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS." AS OUTLINED IN REFTEL, THE MAIN OUTCRY HAS BEEN OVER THE PERCEIVED UNEQUAL TREATMENT IN THE REPORTS OF THE STATUS OF THE RESPECTIVE MINORITIES IN GREECE AND TURKEY. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN ACCUSATIONS THAT THE U.S. IN ITS REPORT ON CYPRUS EQUATES THE AGGRIEVED GREEK CYPRIOTS WITH THE TURKISH AGGRESSORS WHO INVADDED CYPRUS. MOST EDITORIALS PROTEST THE DISTORTIONS AND INCOMPLETENESS OF THE REPORTS, WITH MANY POINTING OUT THAT IF PRESIDENT CARTER HAD THE OBLIGATION TO RAISE THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, HE HAD THE SAME OBLIGATION TO INFORM THE CONGRESS FULLY AND ACCURATELY ON EACH COUNTRY.

4. THE COMMUNIST PRESS WROTE THAT THE REPORTS WERE A MONUMENT OF "IMPERIALIST HYPOCRISY." PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS CRITICIZED THEM AS PROVOCATIVE AND COMMENTED THAT NOT ONLY DID THEY ENCOURAGE TURKISH CHAUVINISM BUT THEIR UNACCEPTABLE CONTENTS RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ENTIRE AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN. THESE JOURNALS PRAISED THE GOG FOR ITS DEMARCHE TO THE U.S. AS DID SEVERAL OPPOSITION PAPERS. INFLUENTIAL COLUMNIST GEORGE DROSSOS, WRITING IN PRO-GOVERNMENT KATHIMERINI, CONTRASTED THE TREATMENT OF THE MOSLEM COMMUNITY IN GREECE WITH THE GREEKS IN TURKEY AND INCLUDED STATISTICS ON THE DECLINE OF THE GREEK MINORITY SINCE THE 1923 LAUSANNE TREATY. DROSSOS CONCLUDED THAT MISTAKES LIKE THESE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING ANTI-AMERICANISM IN GREECE.

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5. THE RIGHT WING PAPERS INITIALLY EXPRESSED HEATED INDIGNATION AT THE REPORTS. THEY ALSO CALLED FOR PUBLICATION OF THE FULL TEXTS. ELEFTHEROS COSMOS, WHICH WAS THE ONLY PAPER TO PUBLISH THE FULL TEXT OF THE REPORT ON GREECE (FEBRUARY 16), COMMENTED THAT SOME PAPERS HAD EARLIER PUBLISHED PARTIAL EXCERPTS ABOUT THE MOSLEMS IN THRACE WITH THE INTENTION OF CREATING FALSE IMPRESSIONS. LIKE OTHER NEWSPAPERS, COSMOS ALSO CALLED FOR A GREATER GOG EFFORT TO PRESENT THE GREEK CASE TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION.
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